

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT
OF CAREER EDUCATION

The logo features a large, stylized oval with a dark blue outer ring and a white inner ring. Inside the white ring, the words "VISION 2020" are written in a bold, white, serif font. Behind the text, the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas is visible, featuring a central figure holding a torch and a scroll, surrounded by a circular border with the text "GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS".

VISION 2020

A PLAN FOR EXCELLENCE

The world in which we operate is changing rapidly, and the implications of these changes on education and training are great.

Today's knowledge-based economy is transforming the demands of the labor market and placing new demands on citizens who need more skills and knowledge to be able to function in their day-to day-lives.

Changing workforce demographics are revolutionizing long-held tenets about the education and training needs of students and clients. There are fewer younger workers and many more women, immigrants, minorities, and older persons in the workforce.

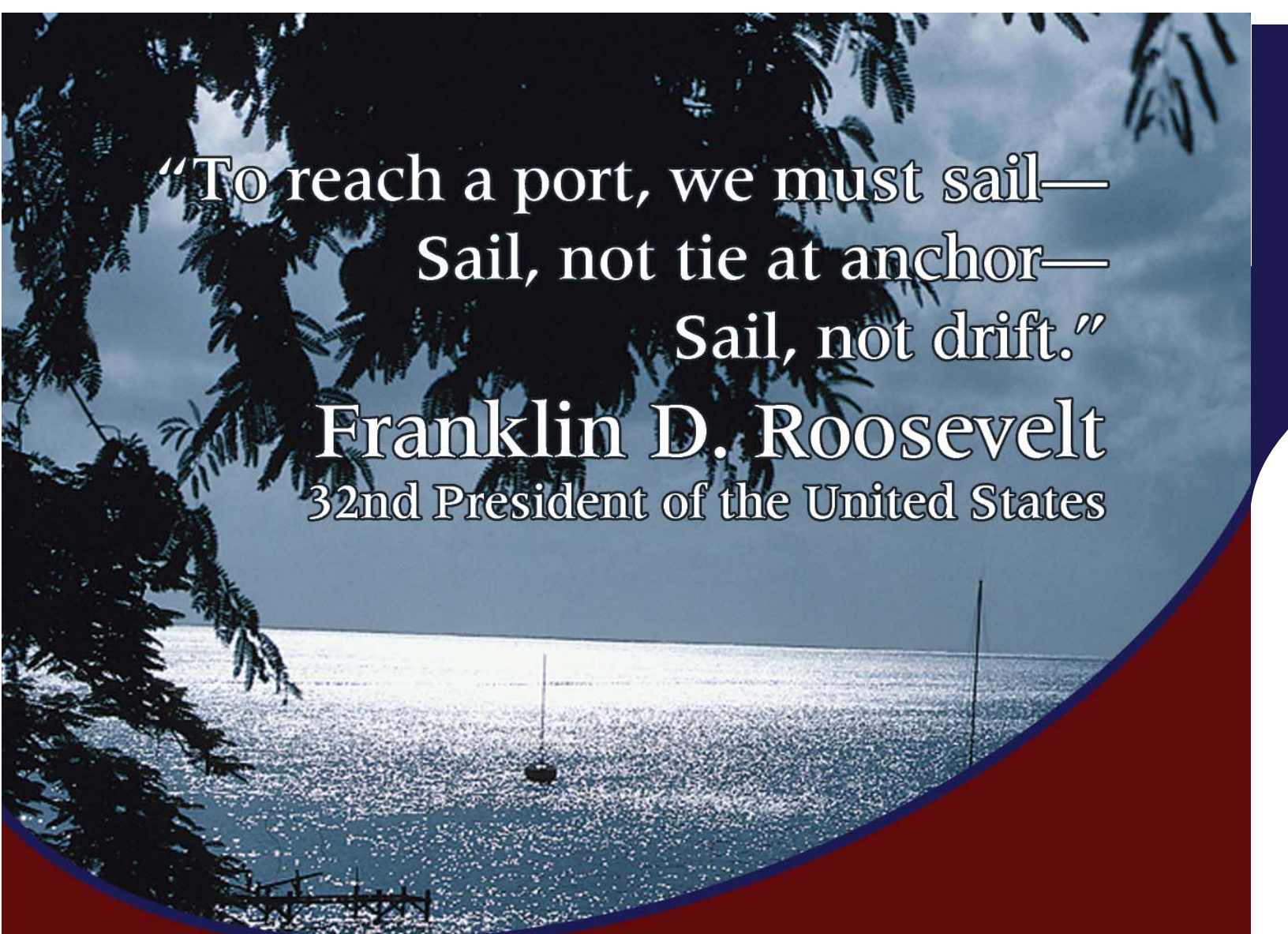
New technologies are changing the ways programs and services are delivered. From I-Pads in the classroom to our state-of-the-art computerized case management system, we are using technology to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges—to truly become “learner-based” and “client-focused.”

In order to ensure that our vision becomes real and to gauge our progress and successes, we will regularly monitor our initiatives. We will continue to engage our many supporters and partners as we work to achieve our vision.



“Our vision is a work in progress, a living document that will continue to be modified as time moves forward and challenges and opportunities change.”

William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr.
Director, Arkansas Department of Career Education



**“To reach a port, we must sail—
Sail, not tie at anchor—
Sail, not drift.”**

Franklin D. Roosevelt
32nd President of the United States

Agency Strategic Priorities

GOAL 1

Provide quality programs and services meeting industry standards and preparing students and clients with 21st-century skills

GOAL 2

Increase the use of technology in our agency to deliver those quality programs required for the future Arkansas workforce

GOAL 3

Change the future economy of Arkansas by increasing the completion and attainment of our students and clients in those quality programs

GOAL 4

Communicate, market, and promote the success of those quality programs

GOAL 5

Determine who is not being served or not being successful in those quality programs and create success for them.

Career and Technical Education

I ask every American to commit to at least one year or more of higher education or career training. This can be community college or a four-year school; vocational training or an apprenticeship. But whatever the training may be, every American will need to get more than a high school diploma.

President Obama

Address to Joint Session of Congress
February 24, 2009

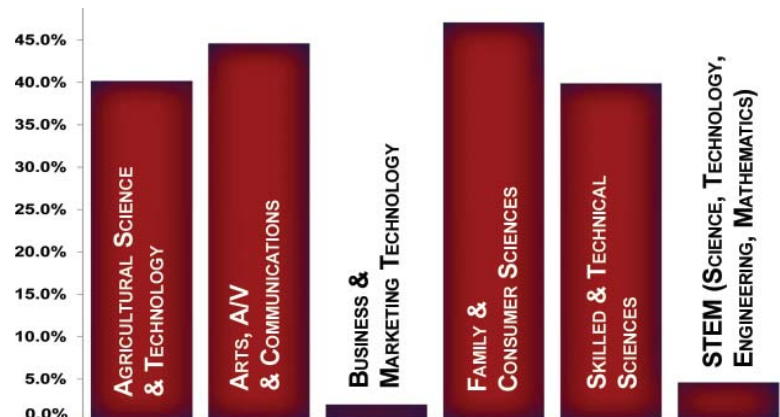
The purpose of high school is to prepare students for successful lives after graduation. For all students, this preparation means mastering basic skills, English language arts, and mathematics. For many students, it means getting ready for further education and training. For other students, it means gaining the skills for employment. For most students, it means both.

Accomplishments

Our Students Are Achieving Academically

- The number of CTE completers is increasing in every program area. (Completers are students who complete a minimum of three units of credit, including the core required courses, in a CTE program of study and graduate from high school.) Increases in the number of completers by program area are as follows:

- **Agriculture Science and Technology** - 40.2 percent
- **Arts, A/V and Communications** - 44.6 percent
- **Business and Marketing Technology** - 2.0 percent
- **Family and Consumer Sciences** - 47.1 percent
- **Skilled and Technical Sciences** - 39.9 percent
- **STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)** - 4.6 percent



- The percentage of CTE completers scoring at the proficient or advanced level in literacy has increased by 11.27 percent over the past five years.
- The gap between CTE completers and all Arkansas students scoring proficient in literacy decreased from 7.47 percent in 2008 to just 2.87 percent in 2011.
- The percentage of CTE completers scoring at the proficient or advanced level in geometry has increased by 10.58 percent over the past five years.
- In 2011, the gap between CTE completers and all Arkansas students scoring proficient in geometry decreased from 5 percent in 2006 to no gap at all in 2011.

Accomplishments

Our Students Are Going to College

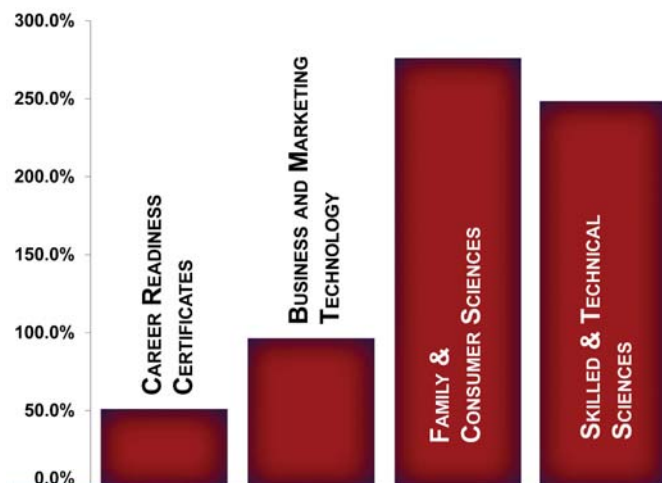
- **The number of CTE completers** going to college has increased 7.48 percent over the past five years.
- 85.5 percent of CTE completers will attend an Arkansas college within six years of graduation, according to a six-year study by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.
 - 13 percent completed a baccalaureate degree
 - 7.6 percent completed an associate degree
 - 4.9 percent earned a technical certificate of proficiency
 - 16.7 percent were still in college
- Arkansas offers concurrent credit to ease the transition from secondary to postsecondary. Over the past six years, secondary career center students earned a total of 180,274 concurrent credit hours, representing a \$14.3 million savings in college tuition costs.
- The college-going rate for students in the 21 economically challenged counties served by the Arkansas Works Career Coaches Program increased by 16.95 percent from fall 2009 to fall 2011, while the college-going rate for all Arkansas students increased by only 5.3 percent over the same period.



Accomplishments

Our Students Find Success in Further Education or Employment

- The placement rate (postsecondary education or employment) has been above 94 percent every year for the past five years except in 2009-10, when the rate dipped slightly to 93.89 percent.
- Many CTE courses prepare students for industry certification opportunities. Earning an industry certification demonstrates the professional skill level the student has achieved and provides industry-recognized proof that the student is prepared for career-related responsibilities or postsecondary education or training. The number of CTE completers earning industry certifications increased from the 2009-10 school year to the 2010-11 school year as follows:
 - **Career Readiness Certificates - 51.1 percent**
 - **Business and Marketing Technology - 96.4 percent**
 - **Family and Consumer Sciences - 276.4 percent**
 - **Skilled and Technical Sciences - 248.7 percent**



Accomplishments

The New Face of CTE

Throughout most of the 20th century, “vocational education” focused on providing narrowly focused, specific job skills for students who were not considered college material and would go straight into the workforce. As the global economy and giant leaps in technology became reality, vocational education transformed into career and technical education (CTE).

The change is more than name only. Today, **CTE offers a wide array of options for all students, a seamless transition between secondary and postsecondary education, and a system of lifelong learning.** Today’s CTE students learn math, science, language arts, and technical skills, and they also understand how to apply their learning in real-world contexts.

In 2011, the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 743 entitled AN ACT TO ESTABLISH ARKANSAS COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS; TO DEVELOP CRITERIA TO EVALUATE, SUPPORT, PROMOTE, AND FUND ARKANSAS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. The intent of this act was to create the Arkansas College and Career Readiness Planning Program; to lower educational costs, shorten a student’s time to degree completion and increase the overall success rate of Arkansas students by reducing the need for remediation; and to ensure that students have the career-readiness skills to compete in the global economy.

Arkansas participates in several national high school reform models that integrate academics, technical skills, and career preparation:

- **Common Core State Standards and Common Career Technical Core**—Arkansas recognizes the criticality of both academic and career preparation. In 2010, the state adopted the national Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS defines the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education so that they will graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. Arkansas is also in the process of adopting the national Common Career Technical Core (CCTC). The CCTC is a set of high-quality standards defining what students should know and be able to do at the end of a CTE program of study within a particular career field.
- **Project Lead the Way**—The national Project Lead the Way (PLTW) program is being expanded in Arkansas as part of the STEM Works initiative. PLTW programs are designed to engage, encourage, and educate students of diverse backgrounds, helping them all to become college- and career-ready. Students develop critical thinking skills through hands-on project-based learning that prepares them to take on real-world challenges. The three main PLTW programs are Gateway to Technology, Pathway to Engineering, and Biomedical Sciences.
- **High Schools That Work/Technology Centers That Work**—Arkansas participates in the Southern Regional Education Board's (SREB) High Schools That Work, the nation's largest school improvement initiative for high school leaders and teachers. Arkansas also participates in Technology Centers That Work, the SREB's school improvement initiative designed to help secondary technical centers review and implement the actions needed to produce high-demand, high-wage graduates.
- **Career Academies**—The career academies operate as small schools-within-schools and are focused around career themes such as

medical professions, information technology, or law and public safety. Career academies integrate technical knowledge with core academics that qualify students for admission to four-year colleges or universities.

Governor Mike Beebe and the Governor's Workforce Cabinet have promoted several initiatives to enhance the technical and academic skills of students and adults, as well as to assist them in making informed career decisions:

- **Arkansas Works**—Established in fall 2009 as an initiative of Governor Mike Beebe and the Workforce Cabinet, the Arkansas Works program is a strategic initiative to coordinate education, training, and economic development in Arkansas communities. Arkansas Works has three components: the Arkansas College and Career Planning System, a web-based career planning tool powered by Kuder™; the College and Career Coaches Program that serves 21 of Arkansas's most economically challenged counties and three Little Rock high schools; and the ACT Academy, designed to increase ACT scores, reduce remediation, and improve the effectiveness of college and career information given to students and their families.
- **STEM Works**—This initiative focuses on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education in high schools and universities, so that the state's workforce will be able to meet the escalating demand for employees in high-tech fields. STEM Works specifically seeks to overhaul the ways in which Arkansas high school students receive STEM education and to increase the number of well-qualified STEM teachers.
- **Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate Program**—Arkansas is one of 49 states with a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) program, which is based upon the KeyTrain® curriculum developed by ACT® Inc., the originator of the college entrance examination. The CRC confirms to employers that a job-seeker possesses the basic workplace skills required for 21st-century jobs. Many of the state's high schools are implementing the KeyTrain curriculum, which will allow high school students to graduate with CRC certification.

- **Microsoft IT Academy**—Piloted in the 2012-13 school year, the Microsoft IT Academy provides web-based instruction and opportunities to earn industry-recognized certifications, including Microsoft Office Specialist, Microsoft Technology Associate, or Microsoft Certified Professional. Topics range from computer basics to high-level programming, along with

information and communications technology management. All public high schools and adult education centers will eventually offer the program. Arkansas is the first state in the nation to offer the Microsoft IT Academy to adult learners, who can access services at adult education centers and Arkansas Workforce Centers.

Career guidance has been dramatically enhanced. All students now have access to quality career information resources. Adults also have access to career information and planning resources.

- **Career Development Facilitators**—Career development facilitators (CDFs) are specially trained to work with students or dislocated workers to assist with vocational and educational planning, assessments, and workforce preparation from middle school through post-secondary education and the adult workforce. Arkansas has made a priority of training CDFs, with more than 400 CDFs now located throughout the state in high schools, adult education centers, and Arkansas Workforce Centers.
- **Arkansas College and Career Planning System, powered by Kuder®**—This web-based resource is provided to all Arkansans free of charge. Through the use of the system's research-based assessments, individuals can explore their interests, skills, and work values. This resource also helps them create educational plans, build a lifelong electronic portfolio, explore postsecondary opportunities, apply for financial aid, and search for jobs locally and across the state—all from a single website.
- **Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates (JAG)**—The state affiliate of the national JAG program, Arkansas's JAG program has become a leader in implementing the national JAG model. JAG provides a variety of support services to at-risk youth designed to encourage them to stay in school through graduation, pursue post-secondary education, and secure quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities. Arkansas's JAG program has received three grants to enhance services,



including a \$250,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation, a \$425,000 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant, and a \$40,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority.

- Through the registered apprenticeship program, apprentices learn occupational skills not only in the classroom but also through hands-on, paid, on-the-job training. The cre-

dential earned by an apprentice is a portable and is recognized by industry. An innovative new program directed through the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition is the development of training to meet the needs of industries as they implement green technology practices. Arkansas's youth apprenticeship program provides high school students an introduction to work-based learning and industry-defined employability and occupational skills.

Career and Technical Education: Pillars of Transformation

The vision for the Career and Technical Education Division (CTE) of the Arkansas Department of Career Education through 2015 is to modernize college- and career-readiness programs through innovation, collaboration, alignment, and accountability to provide students technical skill development and guidance toward career opportunities.

The CTE Division has established four Pillars of Transformation upon which each department will establish challenging but attainable goals with objectives (tasks) and performance indicators to support the ACE vision.





Pillar 1—Improve the Image

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will recruit students into CTE programs of study by **emphasizing how programs align with college and career opportunities**. Increasing student participation in relevant and rigorous programs of study will increase the number of CTE completers from 11,000 to 12,500.

Learning that works for Arkansas

CTE™

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will create an atmosphere of professional leadership by developing strategies and best practices that communicate effectively and demonstrate a consistent message to all staff, school system personnel, and the public.

Pillar 2—Improve and Support Program Development

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will implement new practices and models to increase the emphasis on innovation by **increasing the number of high-skill, high-wage, high-demand pathways** and reducing low-performing pathways, which will lead to increased family-sustaining wage employment as measured by data provided by the Arkansas Research Center. The number of high-demand pathways will be increased by 10 percent per year, and the number of low-demand pathways will be reduced by 5 percent per year, thereby increasing opportunities for students to achieve positive placement after graduation.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will support systemic reforms to increase the number of high-skill, high-wage, high-demand pathways through the **creation of secondary technical centers accessible to every high school student in Arkansas**.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will develop mechanisms

to **select and fund high-quality career pathways responsive to regional labor-market needs**. Performance will be measured by increased business and education partnerships and industry certifications. Results will be measured by increases in job placement rates, postsecondary enrollment, and certificates and/or degrees.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will facilitate collaboration by **developing a statewide business and industry advisory council with representatives from identified career pathways**. Outcomes include collaboration on training needs, recommendations for technology-based programs in high-demand sectors, and training partnerships.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will promote the Certified Career Ready Communities Initiative at the secondary level by **offering school districts and secondary technical centers incentives and support to become college- and career-ready schools** as defined in the initiative.

2012 - 2015



Pillar 3—Improve College and Career Readiness

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **ensure accountability for improving college-ready outcomes through the integration of the Common Core State Standards.** Improvements will be documented by the following:

- ▣ ACT composite scores will increase from 20.3 to 20.6.
- ▣ High school benchmark literacy scores of CTE completers will meet the state average. The benchmark scores of completers are currently 2.87 percent below the state average.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **improve career guidance, planning, and development strategies to increase retention, completion, and proficiency in career pathways.** The CTE Division will provide incentives to school districts to meet state goals for completion and skill attainment. Success will be measured by improvements in student postsecondary placement, pathway completion, proficiency, and concurrent or articulated credit.

Goal: By 2015, The Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **provide consistent and continual guidance, planning, and alignment between high-quality CTE pathways and labor-market needs** to equip and prepare students for postsecondary education and training for in-demand occupations in high-growth industry sectors. Positive placement in higher-paying occupations will be determined

by tracking CTE completers who have earned a Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). Data from the Arkansas Research Center will be used to track completers

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **promote the development of quality work-based learning opportunities for high-school students** across the state through the involvement of a state business and industry advisory council and local councils.

Goal: By 2015, the Career Technical Education (CTE) Division will **expand the College and Career Coaches Program beyond the currently served 21 counties and three Little Rock high schools** in order to ensure that every middle- and high-school student, beginning in grade 7, has access to a college and career coach. The number of college and career coaches will increase by 33 percent each year. Results will be measured by increased student participation in college and career preparatory activities, pursuit of college and career opportunities, and placements that align with the student's skills, abilities, and interests.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **form a committee of stakeholders to establish guidelines for implementation of ACT 743 of 2011** with the goal of securing additional funding to support college- and career-readiness activities in K-12.

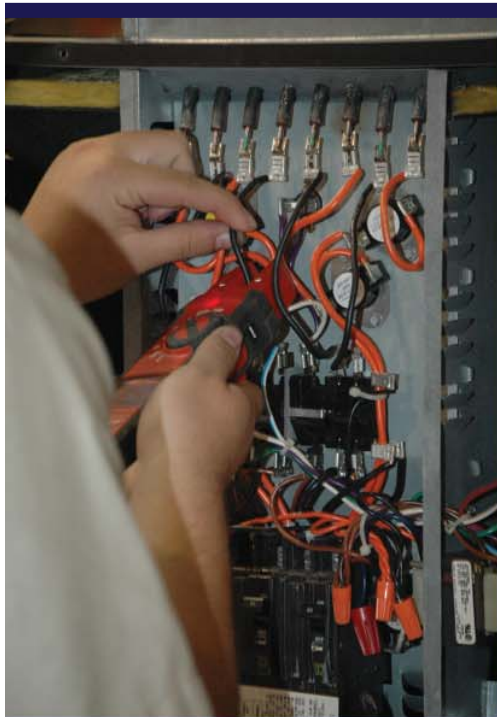
Pillar 4—Improve CTE Instruction

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **boost the rigor and relevance of curricula through the integration of academic and CTE skills** within all articulated postsecondary education pathways. Outcomes include collaboration of training needs, recommendations for technology-based programs in high-demand sectors, and training partnerships.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division **frameworks will be**

aligned to the Common Core State Standards, the Common Career Technical Core, and industry standards.

Goal: By 2015, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division will **review all requirements for permits and endorsements** to determine if the licensing requirements are reflective of content knowledge, education credentials, and work experience if applicable to ensure that CTE teachers are adequately prepared.



Adult Education

Higher levels of skill and education are important not only for gaining access to better jobs, but also for negotiating our bureaucratic society and its complex legal, health care, and retirement systems, and for accessing and comprehending the seemingly limitless amount of information that comes our way.

- Educational Testing Service

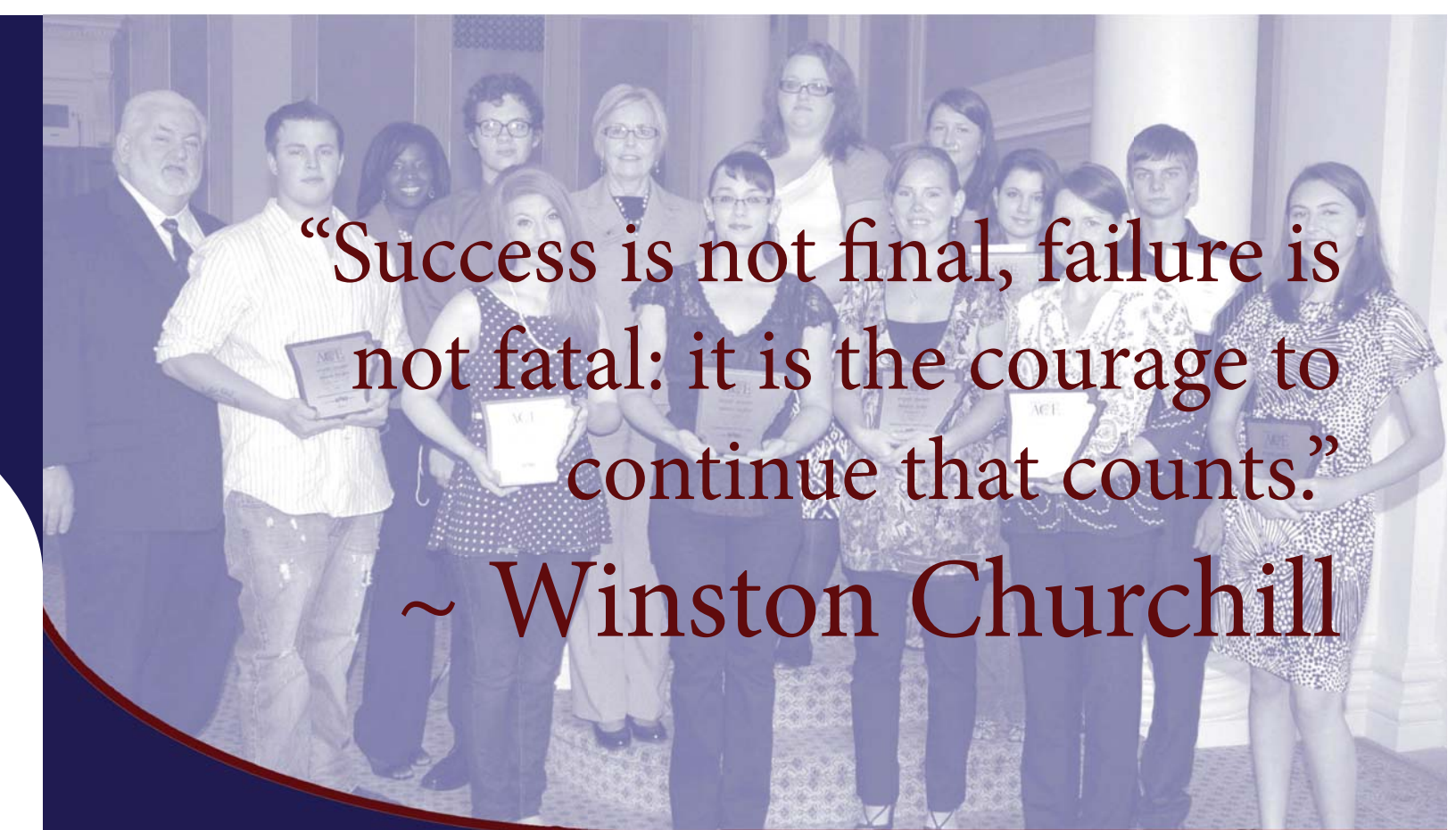
America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing our Nation's Future

Adult Education: Where We've Been

Adult education has a long history of assisting adults in improving their basic academic skills, achieving their educational goals, and transitioning to further education or employment. Instruction is learner-centered and addresses the needs of adults functioning at the lowest levels of basic and English language skills to advanced levels of learning and the attainment of a high school credential.

Accomplishments Arkansas Adults Are Achieving.

- Over the past five years, more than three-quarters of all enrolled students taking both the pretest and the posttest advanced more than two grade levels.
- The pass rate on the GED® test is consistently higher than the national average. While the national pass rate hovers around 72 to 73 percent, Arkansas's pass rate averages 85 percent. The keys to Arkansas's consistent pass rate above the national average are the requirements that all adults pass the official practice test, well-trained examiners who provide an environment conducive to testing, and quality instruction provided by adult education programs.
- The number of Arkansans earning certificates through the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE®) program increased 43.7 percent over the past four years. WAGE provides academic and workplace skills to unemployed and underemployed adults to prepare them for entry-level jobs.
- Individuals earning WAGE certificates saw their annual wages increase an average of 17.8 percent over what they had earned before receiving a WAGE certificate.
- From 16 to 18 percent of students who were unemployed before entering adult education and literacy programs obtained jobs within the first three months after exiting those programs.
- The Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) named Martha Cortes of Rogers as the Adult Learner of the Year for 2009. This national award is presented to a student who has overcome difficult circumstances to pursue adult learning, who has supported other adult learners, and who has managed significant adult responsibilities such as those related to employment, family, or community.



“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

~ Winston Churchill

Who Is Enrolled in Adult Education?

- Over 80 percent are between 19 and 59, the prime working years.
- 20 percent are preparing for the GED® test.
- 15 to 16 percent are learning English as a Second Language (ESL).
- 40 to 45 percent function between the 4th- and 8th-grade levels.
- 20 to 25 percent function between the 9th- and 12th-grade levels.

Greater Expectations

By 2018, 63 percent of all jobs will require postsecondary education. However, in 2010, only 56 percent of adults had at least some postsecondary education. The nation's ability to meet the demand for a more highly skilled workforce depends in part upon increasing the educational levels of adults already in the workforce. At the same time that the number of jobs for workers with a high school credential or less is shrinking, the wage gap between workers with only a high school credential or less and workers with at least some postsecondary education is increasing. The need is especially critical in Arkansas, where 44 percent of working-age adults have only a high school credential or less.

As a result of these factors and the increasing complexity of daily life, there are greater expectations of what adult education should provide. In the past, adult education's charge was to help adults gain basic literacy skills or a secondary school diploma. Now and in the future, adult education's role has transformed into enabling adults to find a sustainable pathway leading to success in postsecondary education, in the workplace, and in a diverse society.

Adult education has met the challenge of greater expectations with new and innovative programs that expand educational opportunities for adults and enhance the knowledge and skills of adult educators and literacy providers:

- **Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™)**—Unemployed and underemployed adults can brush up on their basic academic skills as well as learn job skills to prepare for entry-level jobs through the WAGE program, which was developed and is administered by the Adult Education Division of the Arkansas Department of Career Education. WAGE is a partnership of local employers, government, employment agencies, industrial development organizations, and educators. The first three certificates offered through WAGE were employability, industrial, and clerical. In 2010, a certificate in banking was added, and in 2011, certificates in customer service (two levels) were added.
- **Distance Learning**—Distance learning was piloted in Arkansas in 2009 to provide Internet-based instruction to adult education students who deal with barriers that make classroom-only instruction a challenge. Also, in 2009, Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) began offering Internet-based testing for individuals seeking to earn a WAGE certification.
- **English as a Second Language (ESL) Summer Institute.** The ESL Summer Institute marked its 10th anniversary in the summer of 2010. The institute was established to assist adult education ESL instructors in serving the English language and civics needs of individuals whose native language is not English. ESL adult education students comprise approximately 16 percent of all adult education students.
- **Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC).** The AALRC provides adult education and literacy providers access to a centralized comprehensive resource library, professional development workshops, research, and technical assistance. Over the last five years, the AALRC has provided 453 professional development workshops with 9,350 attendees, has responded to nearly 15,000 requests for materials or assistance with information and services, and provided technical support in 832



instances. Additionally, AALRC has responded to more than 1,000 requests from adult educators and literacy providers, the public sector, state agencies, and students for assistance with disability-related issues such as instructional strategies, GED® testing accommodations, and referrals. The AALRC is funded through the Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative by the Arkansas Department of Career Education.

- **Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation Grant.** In 2009, Ouachita Technical College (now College of the Ouachitas) received a \$70,000 grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to establish a new service delivery system to create a network of agencies and programs to help low-income families reach financial stability and thus maximize their opportunities to connect to work, get more education, live in a good neighborhood, and move up in the workforce.

Adult education has a long history of forming partnerships that meet the challenge of greater expectations by maximizing the use of the state's resources and creating a unified delivery system that is more easily negotiated by adults seeking assistance:

- **Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) Training**—Adults who do not score high enough on the CRC assessment to earn a credential in two attempts can seek further instruction through adult education. Adult education instructors provide academic assessments and encourage these individuals to enroll in adult education classes so that they can be successful. The CRC assessment measures an individual's basic workplace skills in reading for information, applied mathematics, and locating information, and individuals are awarded a bronze, silver, gold, or platinum credential. The CRC is a portable credential that confirms to employers the skill level of a job applicant.
- **Arkansas Career Pathways**—Adult education was an initial participant in the development of the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative and continues to collaborate with the Department of Higher Education and colleges that have the program. Career Pathways is designed to assist adults eligible for Temporary Assistance for

Needy Families (TANF) in earning a marketable educational credential. The Career Pathways Initiative emphasizes basic academic skills, workplace skills, remediation, and postsecondary credentials leading to employment in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand occupations.

- **One-Stop Career Development Centers.** Many adult education programs are located in the Arkansas Workforce Centers or have a satellite program that provides adult education services to jobseekers. Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) programs are also located in the centers to assist jobseekers with job-readiness skills. The Arkansas Workforce Centers, or "one-stops," provide locally developed and operated services that link jobseekers and employers through a statewide delivery system and eliminate the need for jobseekers to visit multiple locations for services
- **Services for Adults with Disabilities.** Adult education programs and literacy councils partner with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) to provide instruction and testing to ARS clients with disabilities and refer adult education students with disabilities to ARS for services. The adult education program at National Park Community College in Hot Springs, for example, provides basic skills instruction at the Arkansas



Career Training Institute, a residential education and training facility for students with disabilities.

- **Career Coaches.** As part of the Arkansas Works Career Coaches program, career coaches assist adult education students in developing career and postsecondary education and training plans. The goal is to empower adult education students to make informed decisions about their career and educational plans and to prepare them for success in postsecondary education and training.
- **Arkansas Baptist College.** The Department of Career Education's partnership with Arkansas Baptist College (ABC) has allowed ABC to expand its adult education offerings to adults seeking to improve their basic skills and earn a GED®. The adult education program that was formerly aligned with Shorter College was re-established in 2012 at Arkansas Baptist College, which will now serve as the local education agency (LEA). The official name is the Central Arkansas Literacy and Learning Center, commonly referred to as the "CALL Center."

Adult education meets the challenge of greater expectations for accountability with new standards that raise the bar for programs:

- **Standards of a Quality Adult Education Program.** This document was developed to ensure that program quality is consistent statewide. The program quality indicators include program planning, student educational gains, staff and staff development, support services for students, recruitment, and retention. These indicators form the basis for record-keeping and continuous program quality.
- **Adult Education Funding Formula.** In 2007, work began on a new funding formula for adult education that would base funding on program performance and thus provide greater accountability. The new formula awards funds based upon a program's performance in student educational gains, GED® credentials earned, and students entering employment or postsecondary education or training. The new formula has been phased in gradually since its development.

Adult Education: Goals



The Adult Education Division of the Arkansas Department of Career Education has charted an ambitious course for adult education in Arkansas. Adult education in Arkansas is based on the following simple philosophy:

- All adults can learn.
- All adults have the right to education that enhances their ability to effect positive changes in their lives.
- All adults have the right to obtain the life skills that they need to become self-sufficient, actively participating members of society.
- All adults have the right to complete their education through the high-school level.

It is adult education's mission to help adult Arkansans gain the academic skills and educational credentials they need to transition to postsecondary education, become productive members of the workforce, make positive contributions to their state and nation, and support their families. Toward that end, the Adult Education Division has set the following goals for 2015.

Goal 1: *Arkansas will be ranked among the top 10 states in the nation annually in the number of individuals who pass the GED® test.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Establish Pearson Vue GED® testing centers** in compliance with the GED Testing Service® to administer the computer-based GED® test in Arkansas.

- **Increase the number of professional development trainings** through the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) to provide full-time and part-time instructors training in effective teaching strategies for adult learners.
- **Increase the number of students enrolling in adult education** by developing a statewide marketing campaign to the community and stakeholders.
- **Conduct quarterly desk audits** to monitor testing alerts of students who have accumulated 60 or more class hours in adult education centers without a test score being entered.

Goal 2: *Training and certification credentials that will help bridge the gap between the world of education and work and meet industry standards of preparing clients with 21st-century skills will be offered in every adult education center in Arkansas.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Implement the Microsoft Information Technology Academy (Microsoft IT Academy)** certification program in every adult education

center in order to increase by 20 percent the wages or academic credit toward college earned by IT Academy certificate holders.

- **Establish a Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy (WAGE™) program in every adult education center** in order to increase by 20 percent the annual earnings of WAGE certificate holders.
- **Ensure students are computer-literate in Teknimedia** before graduating from adult education.

Goal 3: *The Adult Education Division will gain additional funding from the state of Arkansas to support adult education centers that provide services to 16- and 17-year-old students, institutionalized individuals, and dually enrolled remedial students at postsecondary institutions.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Develop legislation to provide a \$2,000 reimbursement** to the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division, for each person under the age of 18 (as of June 1 each year) who earns a GED®/Arkansas High School Diploma.



- **Develop legislation that will provide \$1.5 million** to the Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division, for the Smarter Sentencing Program, which saves the state over \$100 million annually.
- **Develop legislation that will provide funding to students** who are dually enrolled in adult education centers and postsecondary institutions.

Goal 4: *The Adult Education Division will ensure adult education centers are accessible and operating and performing effectively and efficiently based on the Standards of a Quality Adult Education Program.*

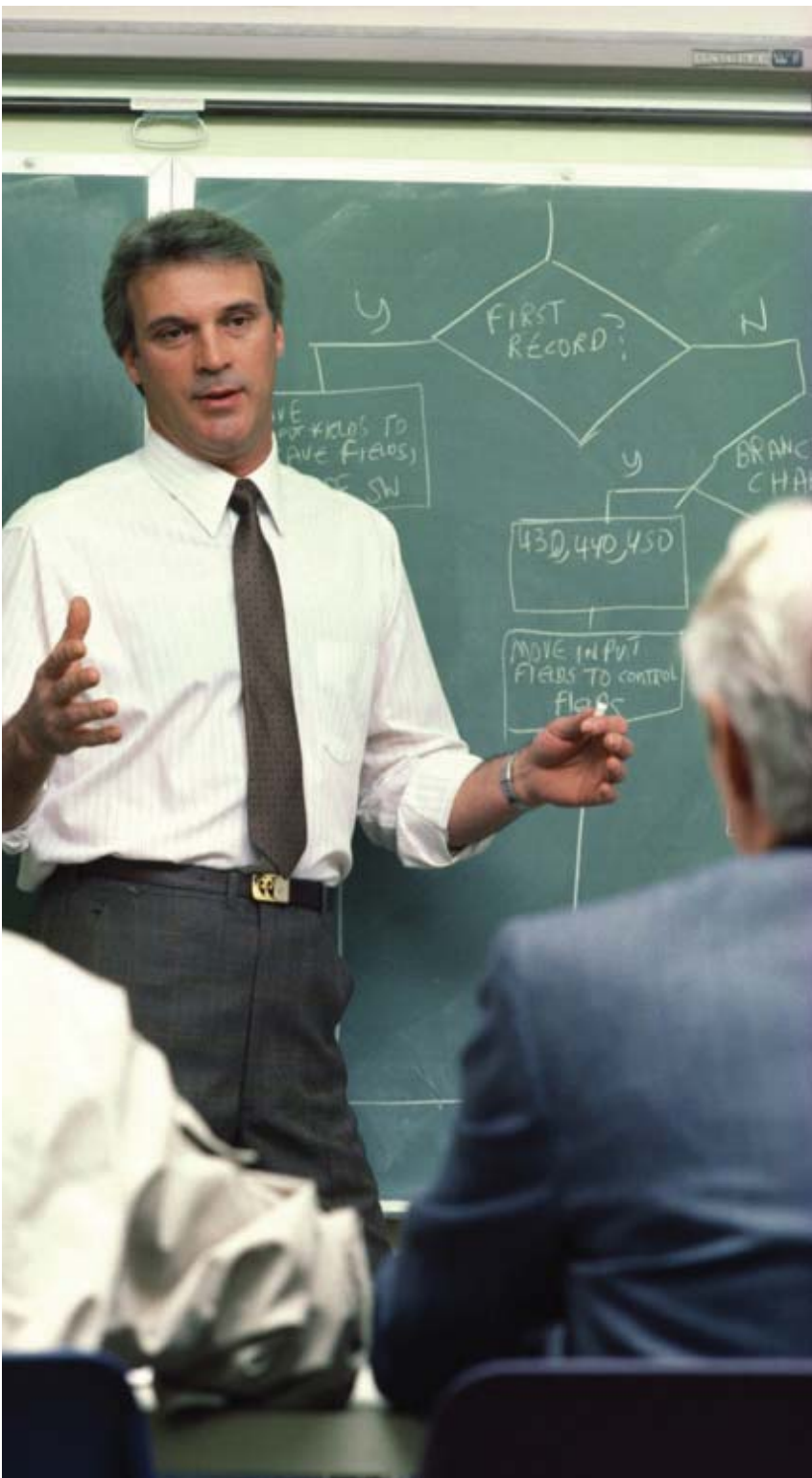
To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Provide technical assistance and monitoring** of adult education centers through annual site visits and program reviews.
- **Require adult education centers to be open year-round;** have at least one full-time teacher, a career coach, flexible operating hours, and state-of-the-art equipment; and offer distance learning.
- **Reduce the number of adult education centers to 35 and increase the number of satellite sites** across the state.
- **Revise the Effective and Efficient (E&E) calculation** to include quality indicators as a measurement of efficiency in the Standards of a Quality Adult Education Program.

Goal 5: *The Adult Education Division will ensure that state and federal grant funds are administered in accordance with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars, and other applicable grant terms and conditions.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Implement grants management software** such as IT Works that keeps track of grants and budgets, provides accounting calculations and reporting, and configures time-and-effort certification.
- **Hire an accounting technician and/or grant coordinator** to review and approve budgets and expenditures, manage the grants management software system, and train sub-grant recipients on quarterly reconciliations.
- **Add financial audits** as a part of program reviews to ensure programs are in compliance in expenditure of state and federal grant funds.



North Little Rock... Helena West Helena/West Memphis... Fayetteville...
 Texarkana... Monticello... ...Jonesboro... Fort Smith...

ACE EXPOS



ACE travels the state to "spread the word" to Arkansans about programs and services offered by the agency. The first expo was held in North Little Rock in October 2010, and since that time, expos have been held in West Helena, Fayetteville, Monticello, Texarkana, Jonesboro, and Fort Smith. More than 3,000 Arkansans have visited the expos.

The expo concept has grown to include a job fair for jobseekers and a reality fair for high school students. The reality fair consists of mini-workshops on budgeting, interviewing, dressing for success, and understanding postsecondary education options.

ACE expos will continue in the future as an extremely successful means of connecting Arkansans to services, thus helping to reach their education and career goals as well as their quality-of-life and independent living goals.



The ACE Expo

It's FREE!

Arkansas Department of Career Education

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services

The value of a postsecondary education to youth with disabilities cannot be overstated. When this population is not supported through policies that enhance its chances for success in college and professional employment, the cost to the nation is likely to be higher.

-- National Council on Disability, People with Disabilities and Postsecondary Education

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division: Where We've Been

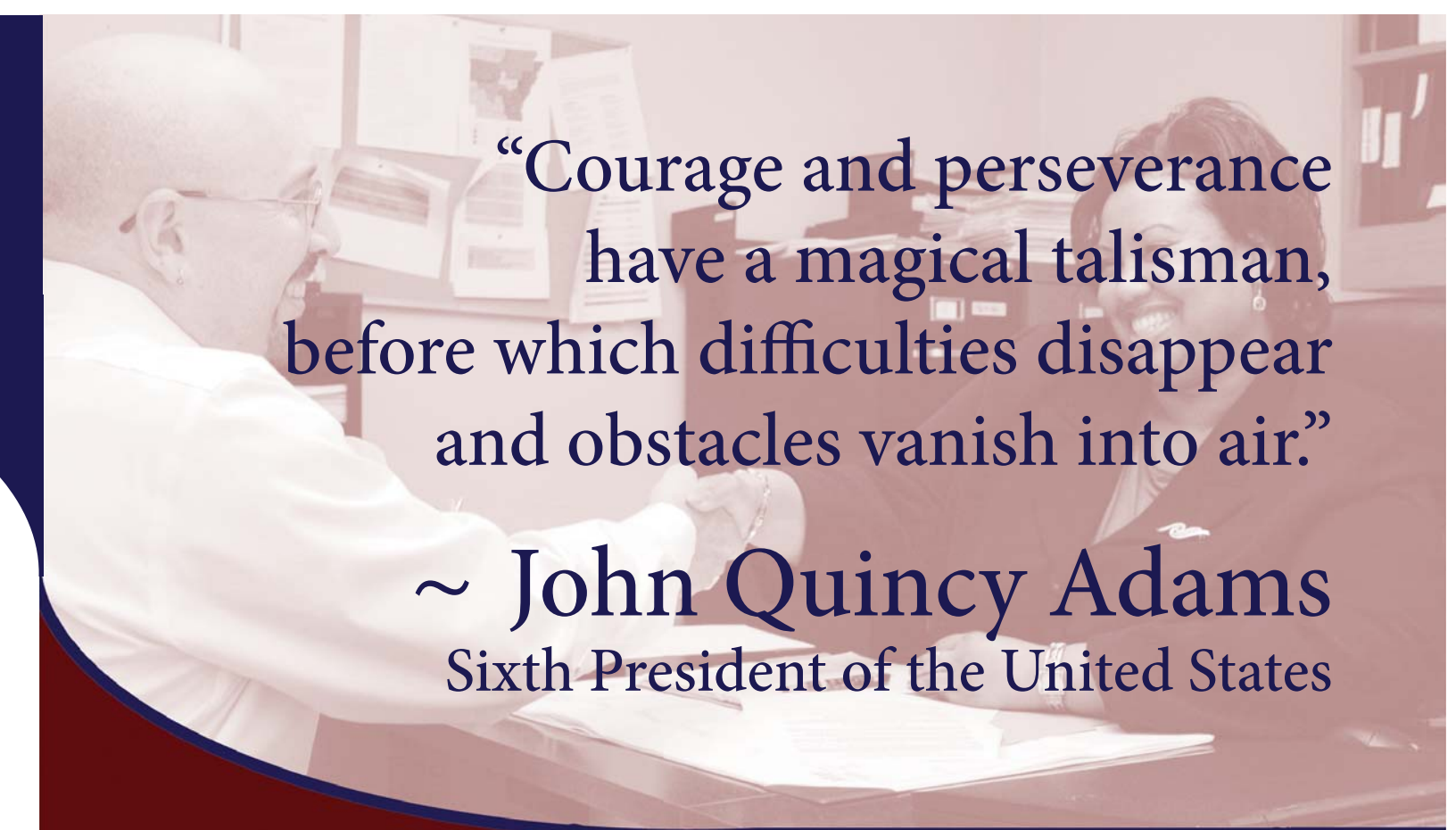
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) dates back to the 1920s with the beginning of the federal Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. Arkansas's VR program was established in 1923, and the scope of services has continued to grow over the years. The services clients can receive include career counseling, career and technical education and training, and medical services if it is determined that medical services will help them find employment. Clients may also receive assistive technology and job placement coaching. The clients who find gainful employment begin to support their local communities, the state, and the nation by paying taxes as well as by spending their earnings in their communities. Employment brings an improved sense of self for clients and pride in being working members of society.

Accomplishments

Our Clients and Students Are Achieving Their Goals.

- Despite tough economic times and a tight job market, **the number of individuals with disabilities placed in jobs has steadily increased** over the past five years. In 2012, there were 2,621 closures, up from 2,309 in 2007. Each of these closures represents an Arkansan with a disability who has successfully become part of the state's workforce.
- In 2011, Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) student **Staci McCollough** attained

the highest level of the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), the Platinum Certificate. She was not only ACTI's first Platinum Certificate recipient but also one of the first individuals in the state to attain this level. The CRC is an initiative of Governor Mike Beebe and the Governor's Workforce Cabinet. The CRC measures work-related skills essential to Arkansas's ability to be globally competitive, confirming these skills to prospective employers.



“Courage and perseverance
have a magical talisman,
before which difficulties disappear
and obstacles vanish into air.”

~ John Quincy Adams
Sixth President of the United States

- ▣ Students belonging to the SkillsUSA chapter at the Arkansas Career Training Institute have captured medals in state and national competitive events every year since the chapter was established in 2008-09. According to the national SkillsUSA organization, only 2 percent of all chapter members nationwide ever qualify to compete at the national level. ACTI SkillsUSA members have also been elected as state officers and national voting delegates.
- ▣ The ACTI Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates (JAG) has qualified as a “5 of 5” chapter, a designation by the national Jobs for America's graduates that is awarded to chapters that achieve high-performance outcomes on measures such as student graduation rates and employment.

Engagement, Empowerment, Excellence

Vocational rehabilitation is charged with the mission of helping individuals with disabilities prepare for, secure, and keep jobs that will allow them to participate fully in their communities as workers and citizens. As technology changes, as the economy changes, and as jobs change, vocational rehabilitation must also evolve to address the changing needs of 21st-century customers. If clients and employers are to be engaged successfully, vocational rehabilitation professionals must be empowered. With engagement and empowerment comes excellence.

Empowering Counselors

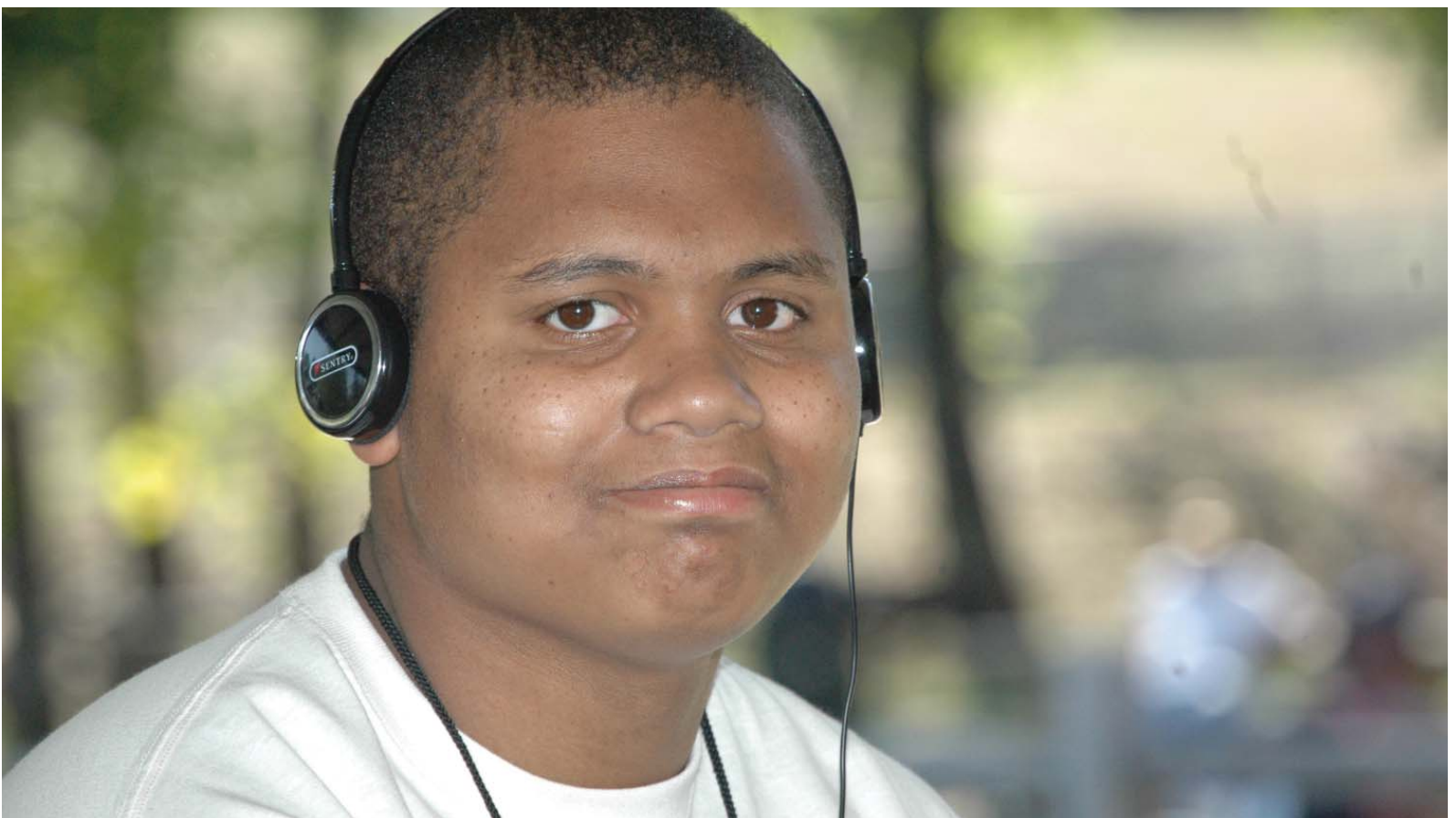
- **Caseload Reduction**—In 2007, the caseload for VR counselors was nearly 200 cases, well above the national average and the recommendation of the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Through restructuring and the hiring of 20 additional counselors, the average caseload was reduced 23 percent to the current 139 cases, which is under the national average of 150. More importantly, the reduction in caseload allows counselors to spend adequate time with clients, improves staff retention, and ultimately has a positive impact on outcomes for clients.
- **New Standard of Service Delivery**—96.3 percent of individuals applying for VR services are now notified within 60 days regarding whether they are eligible for services. This percentage has increased nearly 10 percent in five years and is well above the federal mandate that 90 percent of eligibility determinations be made within 60 days.
- **Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) Training**—Beginning in 2010, an emphasis was placed on assisting all VR counselors in

earning their certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) designation. By 2012, the number of counselors with CRCs increased to 87 percent, surpassing the agency goal of 85 percent, because of an intensive training program designed to prepare counselors for the CRC exam. The CRC certification is an internationally recognized certification program that sets standards for quality rehabilitation counseling services.

- **Business Relations Representatives**—Ten business relations representatives (BRRs) were added to focus on business partnerships and building relations within the employment community. The BRRs assist counselors in placing clients in jobs in which they will be successful and coaching them during their first months on the job.

Incorporating Technology

- **Libera System 7**—In 2010, ARS replaced an outdated, paper-intensive case management system with a new state-of-the-art, web-based system. The new system, Libera System 7, streamlines recordkeeping, allowing counselors to devote more time to assisting clients in achieving their employment goals.



- **Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN)**—Assistive technology (AT) has incredible potential to enable individuals to achieve successful employment and to live more independently. Access to AT devices and services has been expanded in the last five years to benefit more Arkansans. These devices are typically loaned to individuals for short-term use or “try before you buy,” so that individuals can see if a piece of equipment will meet their needs before purchasing it. Additionally, ICAN refurbishes AT devices for donation to Arkansans, saving them more than half a million dollars in 2012.
- **AT@Work**—In 2011, AT@Work redefined its focus to place more emphasis on working with employers. Occupational and physical therapists provide assessment, consultation, training, and technical assistance with assistive technology devices in the workplace. AT@Work has been recognized at the state and national levels. The U. S. Department of Labor’s Job Accommodation Network now recognizes the expertise of AT@Work and refers Arkansas employers directly to the program.
- **Telecommunications Access Program (TAP)**—TAP, which provides telecommunications devices to Arkansans who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, or speech-impaired, served 23 percent more clients in the last five years than during the program’s first 12 years. To keep pace with changes in technology, TAP now provides wireless devices in addition to landline devices.
- **Alternative Financing Program**—This program offers low-interest loans to individuals for the purchase of assistive technology they might not otherwise be able to afford.
- **Health Care Management System (HMS)**—The new system at the Arkansas Career Training Institute tracks not only medical charges and inventories but also student activities, the values of services, and training hours.
- **AgrAbility**—In 2010, ICAN formed a partnership with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service to assist Arkansas

farmers with disabilities who want to remain productive in agriculture. Both ICAN and AT@Work participate in consultations, functional farm assessments, recommendations, and the design and development of new assistive technology for farmers with disabilities.

Expanding Opportunities

- **Career and Technical Student Organizations**—Prior to 2008, there were no career and technical student organizations at the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) in Hot Springs. A Jobs for Arkansas’s Graduates (JAG) chapter was established in the 2008-09 school year; a SkillsUSA chapter in 2008-09; and a Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) in 2010-11. Since then, ACTI students have distinguished themselves at the state and national levels, winning gold, silver, and bronze medals in competition against students without disabilities.
- **Campus Improvements**—ACTI’s campus living environment has been dramatically enhanced over the past five years. The dormitory areas were repainted, and outdated dorm furniture was replaced. A \$6.5 million major infrastructure renovation project began in 2010, with funding provided by Governor Mike Beebe, the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The armory adjacent to campus has been purchased and is being renovated for additional classroom space.
- **Industry Certifications**—In 2007, only two of ACTI’s 12 training programs had any type of industry-based certification. Today, all 12 programs have earned or are in the process of earning industry-based national or state certifications. Industry-based certifications ensure that students are learning skills identified by industry as essential, and additionally, certifications provide graduates a valuable recognizable credential to present to prospective employers.
- **COE Accreditation**—ACTI is a candidate for accreditation by the Council of Occupational Education (COE), a national institutional accrediting agency for the accreditation of

postsecondary occupational education institutions. COE is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and schools that are COE-accredited are considered at the national level as having achieved the highest of standards in career and technical education.

- **Transition for High School Students**—The Arkansas Transition Program (ATP) serves 11 schools with transition counselors specifically dedicated to helping high school students with disabilities transition successfully from high school to further education and training or jobs. ATP partners with Arkansas Works, Jobs for Arkansas's Graduates (JAG), and vocational rehabilitation counselors and is entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Department of Education to provide transition services in all Arkansas high schools.
- **Scholarships and Enrichment Activities**—The Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities provides a variety of activities to benefit youth with disabilities. These activities include a scholarship program; Youth Leadership Forum, which provides high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to experience college life and leadership activities; and Mentoring Day, which places individuals with disabilities in businesses for job-shadowing and mentoring.
- **Expanding Employment Opportunities**—An emphasis has been placed on expanding opportunities through the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program, which provides individuals with disabilities who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) expanded choices in services and supports to enter, re-enter, and/or maintain employment. Through the Small Business Program, vocational rehabilitation clients who wish to explore entrepreneurship possibilities can submit a business plan proposal and learn about resources for starting a business.

Hosting National Conferences

- **The Arkansas Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities** hosted the National



Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities National Convention in 2008.

- **The Arkansas Kidney Disease Commission** co-hosted the American Association of Kidney Patients National Convention in 2011.
- **Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, along with the Arkansas Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns**, hosted the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns Annual Training Conference in 2012.

Earning National Recognition

- **The Retaining a Valued Employee (RAVE)** program was recognized by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) as an "emerging practice" for its success in assisting employees in returning to work.
- **The Arkansas Transition Program** was cited by RSA for its success in providing specialized vocational rehabilitation services to students with disabilities in targeted high schools.
- **The ACE expos** received RSA recognition for community outreach.
- **The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services State Plan** was noted for excellence by RSA.

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services: Goals



Through a set of forward-looking goals, the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division of the Department of Career Education is designing the future of vocational rehabilitation in Arkansas. These goals are intended to address the challenges of the 21st century and to provide a blueprint for future service delivery. Every Arkansan with a disability

needs opportunities to develop or refine his or her workplace skills, opportunities to live independently, and opportunities to participate fully in society. To help individuals with disabilities achieve their potential, ARS has set the following goals.

Goal 1: *A new vocational rehabilitation marketing initiative for the division will include rebranding, a possible name change, and the estab-*

lishment of a free-standing retail facility to provide consumers greater access to assistive technology through the Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN) and the Telecommunications Access Program (TAP).

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Develop and implement** marketing and rebranding strategy.
- **Develop survey research** and focus group feedback.
- **Establish a retail facility** housing ICAN and TAP.

Goal 2: *The Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division will increase the number of employment outcomes of Arkansans with disabilities to 3,000 by 2015.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- Expand the **Retaining a Valued Employee (RAVE)** program.
- Expand the **Assistive Technology (AT @ Work)** program.
- **Provide statewide awareness** of agency services.
- **Increase access** to wireless capabilities and other mobile equipment.
- **Deliver** counseling training support.
- **Develop partnerships** with external job placement vendors.





Goal 3: *A transition summer program will be established in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education to provide employability skills and independent living skills to 100 high school students with disabilities living in the areas served by transition counselors.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Pursue** entering into contractual agreements with the Special Education Division of the Arkansas Department of Education, corporate entities, and educational institutions.
- **Recruit** high school students, employers, and trainers.
- **Provide** pre-employment training for student applicants.

Goal 4: *The Arkansas Business Leadership Network will be established to inform businesses about the benefits of hiring qualified individuals with disabilities.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Establish partnerships** with businesses and state and local chambers of commerce.
- **Expand program** to educate businesses about the benefits of hiring qualified individuals with disabilities
- **Expand communication** with businesses that providing jobs for individuals with disabilities will add economic value to communities.

Goal 5: *The Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI) will increase the graduation and job placement rates of students.*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Create fast-track programs:** Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training, and Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) training.
- **Add a business relations representative** to work specifically with ACTI graduates.
- **Develop a comprehensive client assessment program** to include physical, functional capacity, assistive technology, and psychological assessments to provide a complete picture of clients' potential for job success.
- **Market internally** student successes to increase graduation and job placement.

Goal 6: *Arkansas Rehabilitation Services will increase employment for individuals who require long-term support (Supported Employment).*

To achieve this goal, the following steps will be taken:

- **Increase the amount** of fees for services.
- **Increase the number** of certified providers.
- **Develop** contracts with service providers that require a certain number of individuals to be employed each year.
- **Provide** vocational rehabilitation counselors the training and resources necessary to manage cases that require long-term support.



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